

VZCZCXYZ0004  
OO RUEHWEB

DE RUEHIL #0980/01 1280944  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
O 080944Z MAY 09  
FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2621  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE 9358  
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO IMMEDIATE 5204  
RUEHAAA/THE WHITE HOUSE WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
RHMFISS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL//CCPA// IMMEDIATE  
RHMFIUU/HQ PACAF HICKAM AFB HI//CCPA// IMMEDIATE  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 0272  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 7289  
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 1276  
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI

UNCLAS ISLAMABAD 000980

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [OIIP](#) [OPRC](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PK](#)  
SUBJECT: PAKISTAN MEDIA REACTION: MAY 08, 2009

Summary: Prime Minister Gilani's address to the nation announcing to "launch a full-scale military operation against militants and terrorists in Swat and adjoining areas" dominated headlines in all newspapers on Friday. Newspapers highlighted reports that "war planes and gunship helicopters continued pounding the Taliban hideouts in Swat" and TNSM's Chief "Sufi Mohammad's son was killed in Dir" in security forces' strike. President Zardari's statement declaring that the "operation against the militants would continue till normalcy restored" received front page display. Several major dailies highlighted Defense Secretary Gates' remarks that there were "no plans to deploy U.S. troops to Pakistan." Foreign Office spokesman's remarks asserting categorically that the "Pak-Afghan Transit Trade MoU won't give India free hand to trade with Afghanistan" garnered media coverage.

Most major dailies ran editorials on the different facets of the President Zardari's ongoing U.S. visit and the national security situation. The Peshawar-based Urdu daily, "Mashriq," opined that the "U.S. always succeeds in achieving its objectives by giving mere assurances to Pakistani rulers for economic assistance, concessions in trade, and more job opportunities, and our rulers at all times tell a success story to the nation when they return from Washington." Toeing the line, the pro-Taliban Jihadi Urdu daily "Islam," observed that "it is an old tactic of Americans to lure their 'friends' into financial help to attain their targets, and then shelve the aid package by linking it with Congressional approval." The centrist national daily "The News" observed that "it is for the moment hard to say what direction events in the future will take. But there can be little doubt that, whatever happens, the U.S. will play a key role." End Summary.

-----  
News Stories  
-----

"Gilani Takes The War To The Militants" "The News" (05/08)

"A determined sounding Prime Minister Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani on Thursday ordered the armed forces to launch a full-scale operation against militants and terrorists and to ensure their complete elimination from Swat and Malakand. 'The government will not bow before the militants and terrorists but will force them to lay down their weapons,' Prime Minister in his 20-minute televised address late Thursday evening."

"Troops Determined To Accomplish Mission: Gilani" "Dawn" (05/08)

"Prime Minister Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani said on Thursday that the

armed forces were fully committed to flushing out militants from the troubled areas of Malakand and the government would make all resources available to help them to complete their mission."

"55 Militants, 6 Civilians Killed In Swat Fighting" "The Dawn" (05/08)

"Fifty-five militants and six civilians were killed while several others were injured after fighters, helicopter gunships and artillery pounded militant positions in different areas of Swat on Thursday, official sources said."

"Sufi's Son Killed As Fierce Clashes In Dir Continue" "Dawn" (05/08)

"Maulana Kifayatullah, a son of TNSM Chief Maulana Sufi Mohammad was among several militants killed in fierce clashes with security forces in Maidan and Chakdara on Thursday."

"Taliban Trap Terrified Civilians In Battle Zone" "The Nation" (05/08)

"Taliban militants blocked roads with rocks and trees, preventing terrified civilians from fleeing Swat Valley Thursday as the army stepped up a ground and air assault on the guerrillas that has been applauded by the U.S., witnesses said."

"Journalists Flee Swat Valley" "Daily Times" (05/08)

"Only a few journalists are left in the restive Swat valley to cover military operation against the Taliban, as majority of journalists have fled the area for fear of their safety. Most journalists are on their way to other cities, Mingora Press Club President Salahuddin Khan told 'Daily Times' over telephone on Thursday."

"Operation To Continue Till Mission Accomplished, Says Zardari" "Dawn" (05/08)

"President Asif Ali Zardari said on Thursday that the operation against the militants would continue till normalcy was restored. At a joint news conference with Afghan President Hamid Karzai and U.S. Senators John Kerry and Richard Lugar, President Zardari stressed Pakistan's commitment to defeating the terrorists."

"Kayani Vows Decisive Victory Over Extremists" "The News" (05/08)

"Army Chief General Ashfaq Parvez Kayani on Thursday vowed to secure a decisive victory over the militants, saying the Army is fully capable of handling the present crisis in the country's North West Frontier Province and the Federally-Administered Tribal Areas (FATA)."

"No Plan to Deploy U.S. Troops In Pakistan: Gates" "The News" (05/08)

"There are no plans to deploy U.S. ground troops to Pakistan, U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates said on Thursday, while speaking to 300 Marines at Camp Leatherneck in Southern Afghanistan on Thursday."

"Taliban Foray Into Buner Was Last Straw, Says Gates" "Dawn" (05/08)

"U.S. Defence Secretary Robert Gates said on Thursday the Taliban in Pakistan went too far when its fighters advanced to a district some 100 kilometers from Islamabad, and said he was satisfied that the Pakistan Army was fighting back hard. Mr. Gates, visiting next-door Afghanistan, said there is 'very little chance' that the militant group could ever become strong enough in Pakistan to take control of the country's nuclear weapons."

"MoU Won't Give India Free Hand To Trade With Afghanistan: FO" "The News" (05/08)

"Pakistan declared on Thursday that the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed by Pakistan and Afghanistan on transit trade, did not automatically guarantee that India would be allowed to use the

Wagah-Khyber route for trade with Afghanistan. This is an MoU between Pakistan and Afghanistan for a new arrangement to the existing transit trade. Negotiations will take place and the two countries will reach an agreement at the end of the year, Foreign Office spokesman said at the weekly media briefing on Thursday."

"N-Secrets Can't Be Shared With Any Country: FO" "The Nation" (05/08)

"Pakistan on Thursday declared not to share details of its nuclear program with any other country while rejecting the concerns at international level about the safety of Islamabad's strategic assets, said the Foreign Office spokesman Abdul Basit addressing his weekly press briefing."

"Militants From Across Afghan Border Pose Threat To Pakistan: U.S." "The News" (05/08)

"The United States has said militants operating on Pakistan's Western border and those coming from across the border in Afghanistan pose a serious security threat to Pakistan as the State Department acknowledged Islamabad's enhanced focus on dealing with the challenge. Responding to another question, the spokesman Wood said: 'The Swat peace agreement has basically collapsed. And I think the realization is that these militants need to be taken on and need to be confronted.'"

"Three-Nation Talks On Anti-Terror Strategy" "Dawn" (05/08)

"The U.S.-Pakistan-Afghanistan talks entered a crucial phase on Thursday when intelligence chiefs and military leaders from the three countries started working on a strategy for defeating terrorists in the Pak-Afghan region. But what diplomatic observers in Washington are describing as the 'real talks' began on Thursday when CIA Chief Leon Panetta met D.G. ISI Lt-Gen Shuja Pasha and his Afghan counterpart. Besides Mr. Panetta, the Americans also included FBI Director Robert S. Mueller and, Central Command chief Gen David H. Petraeus in the meetings, indicating that these 'technical talks,' although low-profiled, were as substantial as the summit."

"Obama Wants To Help Pakistan Quickly: Security Advisor" "The News" (05/08)

"President Barack Obama wants to help Pakistan as quickly as possible with both economic and military support as part of a concerted effort to resist the very serious threat of violent extremism, U.S. National Security Adviser James Jones said on Thursday."

"Move To Launch Effort To Bridge Pak-U.S. Gap" "The News" (05/08)

"to bridge the public perception gap, efforts are under way in New York to launch a Pakistani-American Foundation and Foreign Minister Mahmood Qureshi will hold a meeting in New York on Saturday to discuss the idea, according to diplomatic sources."

"U.S., Pakistan, Afghanistan Urged To Do More" "Dawn" (05/08)

"Britain's three leading newspapers, The Guardian, The Times and The Telegraph, have urged the U.S., Pakistan and Afghanistan to do more in their respective spheres to overcome the menace of terrorism. According to The Guardian, President Asif Zardari would need all the support he can get from the U.S. in money and weapon, 'if, as appears likely, the army is about to mount a full-scale assault on Taliban positions in Swat,' There would be a large-scale refugee exodus from the Swat and adjoining areas. It warned that the assault on Taliban by an army which relies on heavy artillery 'will be bloody.'"

"NWFP Crisis Deepening, Says ICRC" "Dawn" (05/08)

"The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) warned on Thursday that a humanitarian crisis was intensifying in northwest Pakistan, where thousands had fled fighting between militants and troops."

"China Voices Concern Over Growing U.S. Influence" "Dawn" (05/08)

"Chinese Ambassador Lou Zhaohui on Thursday said his country was 'concerned over the increasing U.S. influence' in the region. He said the number of foreign forces was 'too high' in the region, while talking to reporters during a visit to the Islamabad Chambers of Commerce and Industry, the Chinese envoy said."

"Obama And Hu Discuss Pakistan, North Korea" "Dawn" (05/08)

"President Barack Obama spoke on Wednesday with his Chinese counterpart Hu Jintao and shared his 'concerns' over security issues including North Korea's nuclear program and deteriorating conditions in Pakistan, the White House said."

-----  
Editorials/Op-eds  
-----

"U.S. Should Bring About A Change In Thinking Along With Methodology," an editorial in the Peshawar-based Urdu-language daily "Mashriq" (cir. 55,000) (05/08)

"U.S. always succeeds in achieving its objectives by giving mere assurances to Pakistani rulers for economic assistance, concessions in trade, and more job opportunities, and our rulers at all times tell a success story to the nation when they return from Washington. Pakistan must not accept the U.S. words as true, unless it (U.S.) takes concrete and tangible steps to fulfill these commitments."

"Trilateral Negotiations And Its Repercussions," an editorial in the Karachi-based, pro-Taliban Jihadi Urdu daily "Islam" (cir. 15,000) (05/08)

"It is an old tactic of Americans to lure their 'friends' by financial help to attain their (U.S.) targets, and then shelve the aid package by linking it with Congressional approval to persuade them (friends) to fulfill their unacceptable demands."

"Washington Winds," an editorial in the centrist national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (05/08)

"President Obama has completed a potentially awkward round of meetings with two men who both face growing difficulties at home.... But is everything quite as rosy as it would appear? Which way do the winds in Washington actually blow and are they preparing to whip up a storm at some point in the not too distant future?... It is for the moment hard to say what direction events in the future will take. But there can be little doubt that, whatever happens, the U.S. will play a key role. The conjecture of discussions between Washington and the Saudis on the situation in Pakistan is also significant in this respect. For these reasons, the visit to Washington was an important one. What impact it has had will become more obvious in the days ahead, when it becomes easier to see behind the veneer created by diplomacy and the TV images of leaders smiling winningly as they look into the cameras."

"President Zardari's Meeting With American Leaders," an editorial in liberal Urdu daily "Express" (cir. 25,000) (05/08)

"The U.S. President and Secretary of State are right in saying that terrorism is a joint problem for the U.S., Afghanistan and Pakistan. In fact it should be seen in an even wider perspective in that it is a global problem because losing the war on terror would create a threat for the entire world, not just these three countries.... Afghanistan is already a country where U.S. and NATO troops are present and are fighting Al Qaeda and Taliban in their own way. Why then are American officials insisting on a joint agreement with Afghanistan and Pakistan? If such a deal aims at allowing foreign troops into Pakistan in hot pursuit, it cannot be accepted. However if the proposed deal strives to resolve Afghan and Pakistani economic problems resulting from the war on terror, then it could be considered.... Secretary Clinton's statement that the U.S. would help India and Pakistan in resolving their water dispute is also encouraging."

"Afghan Trade Corridor," an editorial in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (05/08)

"There is no dearth of statements from American officials, especially Richard Holbrooke, about giving India a major role in Afghanistan, even though the two are not neighbors. This means that either the Americans are naive enough to buy the Indian line that New Delhi's interests in Afghanistan are altruistic, or Washington knows what India is up to but looks the other way. If America is interested in seeing a lasting regional peace, it should be cognizant of Pakistan's security concerns. It is unrealistic to assume that the MoU, as it stands, will automatically pass muster with the security establishment even if it makes no public show of disapproval. If the Obama administration really wants cooperation to grow among SAARC members, it must first try to resolve Indo-Pakistan differences instead of expecting Islamabad alone to show goodwill."

"New Obama Doctrine: 'Do Better' After 'Do More'" an editorial in the Lahore-based independent Urdu daily "Din" (cir. 10,000) (05/08)

"During President Zardari's trip to the U.S., the U.S. administration offered to help resolve the 61-year-old water dispute between India and Pakistan. Let it be mentioned here that the U.S. administration had also offered to resolve the Kashmir issue. However, after becoming President, [Mr. Obama] has never mentioned this issue.... It now remains to be seen how serious the U.S. is in trying to resolve the Indo-Pak water dispute."

"Obama-Zardari Meeting: What Has Pakistan Gained," an editorial in the second-largest, center-right nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 150,000) (05/08)

"Addressing a press conference after meeting with Presidents Zardari and Karzai, U.S. President Obama said that U.S., Pakistan and Afghanistan's security is interlinked.... Afghanistan is the only country in the world which opposed Pakistan's membership to the UN, while America is trying to turn India into a regional cop; and instead of targeting Indian- and Afghan- trained terrorists in Balochistan through drones, the U.S. is creating more suicide bombers by targeting innocent Pakistanis. Hence, saying that the security of these three countries is interlinked is wrong. If the purpose of President Zardari's visit to the U.S. was accede to U.S. wishes for a transit trade deal by bringing Pakistan [down] to the level of Afghanistan, and listening to lectures by Obama and Hillary then the first day of the trip was very successful. God forbid if the activities of the remaining two days are similar, Mr. Zardari may find on his return that the rug has been pulled from under his feet."

"Results of U.S. Visit - Take The Nation Into Confidence," an editorial in the leading mass circulation centrist Urdu daily "Jang" (cir. 300,000) (05/08)

"We look forward that President Zardari will take the Parliament and the nation into confidence about his talks with President Obama, other senior U.S. officials, and on the new Transit Trade Agreement. People must know President Zardari's impression regarding his U.S. visit, and whether there is any likelihood of change in the U.S. policy on Pakistan."

"President Zardari's Trip To America And Its Implications," an editorial in the Lahore-based populist center-right Urdu daily "Khabrain" (cir. 50,000) (05/08)

"Pakistani government has no way of putting pressure on the U.S. or India. The trilateral talks have led to an agreement on giving India transit trade route to Afghanistan through Torkham. We feel that this decision was made in great haste. Had Pakistan wanted, it could have tied this issue to either Kashmir or the water dispute with India. But this haste has led to an opportunity lost."

"Washington Mission," an editorial in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (05/08)

"While President Zardari is in Washington to seek Obama administration's political and economic support, he was told that U.S. stands by the democratic government in Pakistan and would help resolve Pak-India water dispute. In return Washington succeeded in getting Pakistani sign an MoU to discuss allowing Afghanistan to use

the land route with India for trade, a demand that both Kabul and New Delhi have failed to get accepted for the last four decades."

"Transit Trade Facility For Indian: America's Dangerous Game," an editorial in the Karachi-based center-right sensationalist Urdu daily "Ummat" (cir. 33,000) (05/08)

"Taking advantage of President Zardari and his Afghan counterpart Karzai's presence in Washington, U.S. Secretary of State Clinton made both leaders to sign a MoU to give transit trade facility to India, which will pave way for India to establish trade relations with Afghanistan. The U.S. government is only highlighting positive outcomes of this transit facility, however, if one considers other implications such as misuse of this facility for weapon supplies, as this newspaper has recently disclosed that four containers of an American firm loaded with explosives were caught at Karachi port by custom authorities. One can foresee how India, supported by U.S., would supply weapons to Afghanistan via Pakistan."

"A Welcome New Trade Route," an editorial in the Lahore-based liberal English language daily "Daily Times" (cir. 10,000) (05/08)

"Geopolitical importance is linked to 'allowing' trade routes; if you block them you lose your geopolitical importance.... The Afghan transit trade route was an instrument of leverage for Islamabad.... If you don't exploit your geopolitical importance by allowing trade routes, new trade routes tend to by-pass you. The memorandum signed in Washington is in fact a realization that Pakistan's importance as a transit country for Afghanistan's trade is virtually at an end."

"U.S. Commitment," an editorial in the Lahore-based liberal English daily "The Post" (cir. 5,000) (05/08)

"Relations between Pakistan, Afghanistan, and India are marred by a trust deficit. And in this background of lack of trust Pakistan and Afghanistan have signed a memorandum of understanding to begin talks on a transit trade agreement that will ultimately allow India to use the Wagha-Khyber route for trade with the landlocked country. The beginning of transit trade can prove to be a major step in improving relations between the three countries."

"President Zardari And Karzai In White House," an editorial in the Karachi-based right-wing pro-Jamaat-e-Islami Urdu daily "Jasarat" (cir. 3,000) (05/08)

"It is not a surprise that President Zardari and Karzai visited the White House to present their performance reports to seek extension in their rule. President Zardari met with very junior U.S. officials who were lower in rank. The visit has exposed the agenda, the ability, and the performance of our rulers. In a nut shell, the visit has added to the severity of threats and challenges Pakistan is facing in the wake of U.S. occupation, and fighting in Afghanistan and Pakistani border areas."

"Zardari-Karzai-Obama Meeting," an editorial in the center-right Urdu daily "Pakistan" (cir. 10,000) (05/08)

"Only time will tell what the outcome of President Zardari's trip to the U.S. was. However, upon return, he should address the nation and take the nation into confidence about discussions with President Obama and President Karzai."

"Trilateral Talks What Results It Would Produce," an editorial in Hyderabad based liberal and independent Sindhi Daily "Ibrat" (05/08) (cir. 80,000)

"The trilateral meeting in Washington seems to be a good support to democratic setup in Pakistan. President Zardari rightly said during press conference that the former U.S. President Bush supported military dictatorship in Pakistan for eight years; it is now time to support democracy. It seems that the Obama administration is supportive of democratic system, and rightly considers war against extremism and Al Qaeda as a shared responsibility of all the three countries."

"Obama's Statements," an editorial in the Lahore-based independent Urdu daily "Din" (cir. 10,000) (05/08)

"It needs to be mentioned here that President Obama avoided answering questions from the media. And in his remarks, he targeted Al Qaeda instead of the Taliban, and he also used the term 'extremists.'"

"Drone Attacks," an editorial in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (05/08)

"The continuing U.S. drone incursions are robbing our security forces of some of their moral legitimacy and are, in fact, undermining the war effort.... The repeated U.S. violations of the country's territorial integrity subvert our government's efforts to make this 'Pakistan's war' and lend currency to the extremists' claim that Pakistan is merely a pawn in what is, essentially, America's war.... America's actions stand in danger of being viewed as wanton foreign aggression against innocent populations. And the drone strikes are contributing to the increasing number of refugees fleeing the area.... It may soon be asked whether Afghan or Pakistani lives are less precious than those of the Americans. A serious rethink is in order. The American military must confine itself to the western side of the Durand Line."

"Mines In Malakand," an editorial in the centrist national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (05/08)

"If indeed mines do exist, the civilian population needs to be warned and put on the alert. Their presence will undoubtedly add to the suffering inflicted by a war that has already gone on far too long. The main task before our security forces is to bring it to an end as rapidly as possible, so that the people of Swat can resume lives that have remained interrupted for far too long."

"Critical Mass," an editorial in the centrist national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (05/08)

"As the IDPs are tired of their circular journeys so we are tired of reading about it and seeing it on our screens. Tired we and they may be, but somebody has to try to pick up the pieces for them every time their lives are blown apart, and it is the Red Cross and Crescent, the U.N. and the hard-pressed government who today find themselves struggling to cope."

"Release Hafiz Saeed Now," an editorial in the second-largest, center-right nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 150,000) (05/08)

"Addressing an Ulema convention organized by Jamaatud Dawa, Professor Sajid Mir, Dr. Israr, Liaqat Baloch, Allama Ibtisam Illahi and other speakers demanded that the government lift the ban on Jamaatud Dawa, release Hafiz Saeed, recover missing persons and get Dr. Aafia released from the U.S.... Why are our rulers making the citizens' lives miserable just to appease an enemy country [reference to India]? Services rendered by Jamaatud Dawa after the 2005 earthquake were recognized by the U.S. and UN also. Hence there is no justification to keep Hafiz Saeed detained or to maintain a ban on Jamaatud Dawa on the enemy [India] demand."

"U.S. Strategy Worked Well With Zardari" an analysis by Azim M. Mian in the centrist national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (05/08)

"President Zardari has emerged as more confident and composed following the public statement of U.S. President Barack Obama after two bilateral Obama-Zardari and Obama-Karzai and trilateral meeting of Obama, Zardari and Karzai at the White House. President Zardari is extremely happy with the outcome of his visit to the U.S. as President Obama's kind words of support to his government will lend him another chance to consolidate himself and his grip over his government and the party by posing himself as U.S. backed and 'democratically elected' President of his country with powers under the 17th Amendment. Every American knows as says that 'There is no free lunch' in America. Knowledgeable U.S. sources say there are two aspects of Asif Zardari's visit to Washington. One is public and the other is real and covert."

"Amused U.S. Leaders Stop Short Of Endorsing Zardari," an analysis by Shaheen Sehbi in the centrist national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (05/08)

"Top U.S. leaders are amused, a little irritated, at the almost annoying refrain of President Asif Ali Zardari that democracy in Pakistan should be protected and it will deliver everything the U.S. wants. In other words, said a U.S. expert who has been meeting officials on both sides: 'Mr. Zardari is saying to Mr. Obama 'Protect me, I am democracy and I will deliver.' But in all the statements coming from Obama downwards after the White House talks and the State Department meetings, no specific guarantees have been given to protect Zardari, but all assurances have been given for continuing with democracy in Pakistan and to provide billions of dollars to build social and economic infrastructure so that the root-causes of discontent are addressed."

"Pakistan Being Short-Changed Again," an op-ed by Ayaz Amir in the centrist national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (05/08)

"The American aim all along has been for the army to forswear the habits of a lifetime and forget India, and throw all it has against the growing threat from the Taliban.... The American have us where they want us. They had to build the Iraq army from scratch. They are trying to create, with so far unsatisfactory results, a new Afghan army. Just look at the billions they have had to pour into Iraq and Afghanistan and the relative pittance being envisaged for Pakistan in the Kerry-Lugar bill and it becomes pretty clear that this is the cheapest free lunch the Americans are about to have at Pakistan's expense.... Al Qaida and the Taliban sure have to be fought but Gen. Ashfaq Pervez Kayani should be calling the shots, and determining the pace of events, not His Highness Gen David Petraeus."

"Taliban Will Be Defeated This Time," an op-ed by Hamid Mir in the centrist national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (05/08)

"The Majority of the people in Pakistan never cared about the U.S. disliking the agreement, but they were annoyed when the Taliban violated the agreement. This time local people are not supporting the Taliban. Having said that, the Pakistanis want to defeat the Taliban but at the same time they want to get out of America's influence as well. They would like to defeat the Taliban with a Pakistani strategy, not with a 'U.S. plan.' They dislike Talibanization and they also dislike the Americanization of the world.... The time has come for Pakistan to come up with a strategy to defeat the Taliban with the help of friends in the east. And the ironic thing is that Pakistan's friends in the west will be the ultimate beneficiaries of this success."

"Taliban, Pakistan And The Occupiers," an op-ed by Dr. Muzaffar Iqbal in the centrist national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (05/08)

"There is really no logical necessity for the state of Pakistan to side with the occupation forces in Afghanistan now, when there is a so-called elected government, which can easily re-examine its role by taking the case to parliament and have the elected representatives say 'no' in a loud and clear voice and then forcefully appeal to the world to listen to its voice. This option is available, however, only if the government of Pakistan is willing or able to stand on its own feet, on the strength of its own people."

"Fighting the Barbarian Hordes," an op-ed by Shafqat Mahmood in the centrist national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (05/08)

"The hapless people fleeing their homes in the war zone owe their misery to the extremists not to the military. It is they who have instigated this fight by invading these areas. The state had no option but to respond.... There is no ambiguity any longer about what these people (Taliban) really want. They have been so exposed that even the media Taliban are finding it difficult to defend them."  
Feierstein